On Campus with Max Shulman

(Author of "Barefoot Boy With Cheek," etc.)

STUDYING MADE SIMPLE

I have passed my thirty-fifth birthday, and my dewlaps droop and my transmission needs oil. More and more my eyes turn inward, reminiscing, sifting the past, browsing lovingly among my souvenirs, for at my time of life memories are all a man has.

And most precious are the memories of college. It still makes my pulses quicken and my old glands leap to *life just to think of it.* Ah, I was *something* then! "Swifty" my friends used to call me, or "Rakehell" or "Candle-at-both-Ends" or "Devil Take the Hindmost." My phone was ringing all the time. "Come on, Devil-Take-the-Hindmost," a cohort would say, "let's pile into the old convertible and live up a storm. I know a place that serves all-bran after hours."

So it went—night after mad night, kicks upon kicks, sport that *wrinkled care deride,* laughter *holding both his sides.* "Come on, "Candle-at-Both-Ends," my companions would plead, "sing us another two hundred verses of *Sweet Violets.*"

"No, my companions," I would *reply* with a gentle but firm smile, "we must turn homeward, for the cock has long since crowed."

"Twas not the cock," they would answer, laughing merrily. "Twas Sam Leghorn doing his imitation of a chicken!"

And, sure enough, 'twas. Crazy, madcap Sam Leghorn. *How I* miss his gaiety and wit! I never tired of hearing his imitation of a chicken, nor he of giving it. I wonder what's become of him. Last I heard he was working as a weathervane in Tacoma.

Oh, we were a wild and jolly gang in those days. There was Sam Leghorn with his poultry imitations. There was Mazda Watts who always wore a lampshade on her head. There was Freddie Como who stole a dean. There was Cap Queeg who always carried two steel marbles in his hand. There was Emily Hamp who gibbed her *house mother.*

Yes, we were wild and jolly, and the wildest and jolliest was I . . . But not right away. I blush to admit that in my freshman year I was dull, stodgy, and normal. I finally corrected this loathsome condition, but for a while it was touch and go. And, dear reader—especially dear *freshman reader*—be warned: it can happen to you.

The makers of Philip Morris have bought this space so I can bring you a message each week. There is no more important message I can give you than the following: College can be beautiful. Don't loose it up with studying.

That was my mistake. At first, cowed by college, I studied so much that I turned into a dreary, blinking creature, subject to dry-mouth and fainting fits. For a year this dismal condition persisted—but then I learned the real function of college. And what is that? I'll tell you what: *to prepare you to face the realities of the world. And* what do you need to face the realities of the world? I'll tell you what—poise, that's what you need. And how do you get poise? I'll tell you how: not by keeping your nose in a book, you may be sure! Relax! Live! Enjoy! . . . That's how you get poise. Of course you have to study, but be poised about it. Don't be like some clods who spend every single night buried in a book. Not only are they not learning poise; they are also eroding their eyeballs. The truly poised student knows better than to make the whole semester hideous with studying. He knows that the night before the exam is plenty of time to study.

Yes, I've heard that lots of people have condemned cramming. But have you heard who these people are? They are the electric light and power interests, that's who! They want you to sit up late and study every night so you'll use more electricity and enrich their bulging coffers. Don't be a sucker!

Clearly, *cramming is the only sensible way to study. But beware!* Even cramming can be overdone. Take it easy. On the night before your exam, eat a hearty dinner. Then get a date and go out and eat another hearty dinner. Then go park someplace and light up a Philip Morris. Enjoy the peaceful pleasure it offers. Don't go home until you're good and relaxed.

Once at home, relax. Do not, however, fall asleep. This is *too relaxed. To insure wakefulness, choose a chair that is not too* comfortable. For example, take a chair with nails pointing up through the seat—or a chair in which somebody is already sitting.

Place several packs of Philip Morris within easy reach. Good mild tobacco helps you to relax, and that's what Philip Morris is—good mild tobacco. But Philip Morris is more than just good mild tobacco; it is also cigarette paper to keep the good mild tobacco from *spilling all over the place.*

Now you've got the uncomfortable chair and the Philip Morris. Now you need light. Use the lit end of your Philip Morris. Do not enrich the electric power interests.

Read your textbook in a slow, poised manner. Do not underline. It reduces the re-sale value of your book. Always keep your books in prime re-sale condition; you never know when you'll need getaway money.

As you read you will no doubt come across many things you don't understand. But don't panic. Relax. Play some records. Remove a callus. Go out and catch some night crawlers.

Relax. Be poised. Stay loose. And remember—if things really close in, you can always take up teaching.

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